

new mexico architecture

September-October 1974

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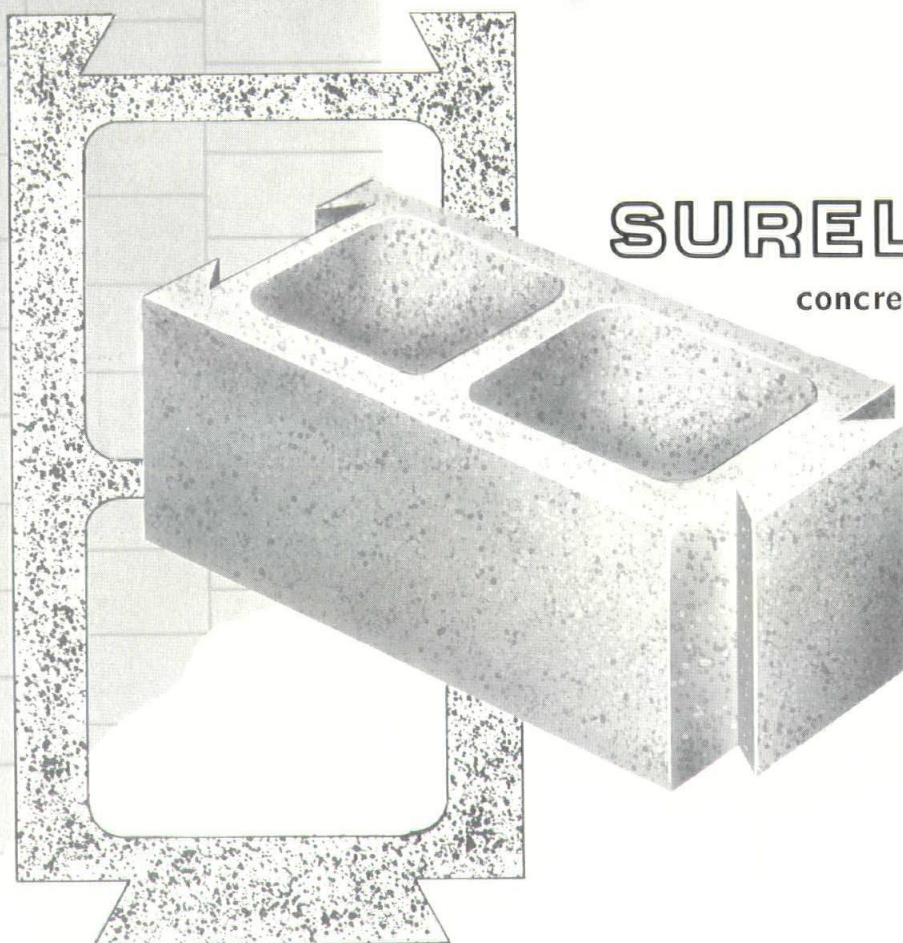
A Last Minute Reprieve for The
Ilfeld Warehouse..... See Page 11

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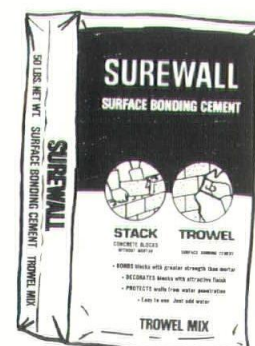
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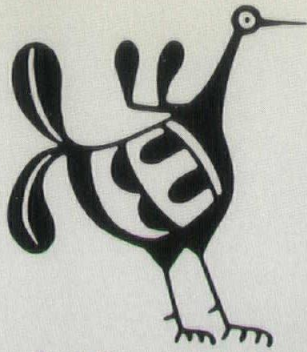
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nma

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IN THIS ISSUE:

The author for the article, "Saving The Ilfeld Warehouse," is one of the principle workers behind the saving of the structure, although he does not credit himself in the article. So, as you read the article remember that the "they" was very often "I." Kevin Munroe has recently graduated from the N. N. M. School of Architecture and is just starting his career in architecture. The profession will be the better with dedicated fighters like Kevin.

□ □ □ □

As this magazine goes into production, your editor escapes to Europe. I have been invited to participate in an Historic Preservation Conference in Poland, October 7-24. A report will appear in, expectantly, the November/December issue of NMA.

□ □ □ □

If this issue seems to be a little heavy on advertising—well, it is! But the last couple of issues have been just a bit advertisement light, especially the July/August.

We have had to, finally, face the fact of spiraling prices for printing, mailing, etc., etc.; we have had to raise our advertisement rates. This magazine does not have a subsidy from Society or Chapter funds. The advertisers—God Bless them—pay for the production, printing and circulation costs of **New Mexico Architecture**. And we must continue to operate, perhaps not "profitably" but "in the black." JPC

OUR ADVERTISERS, YOU NEED THEM ALSO - - -

NMA News 9

Saving the Ilfeld Warehouse 11

—by Kevin S. Munroe

Index to Advertisers 22

(Cover — Ilfeld Warehouse — Richard Khanlian Photography)

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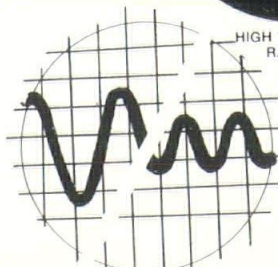
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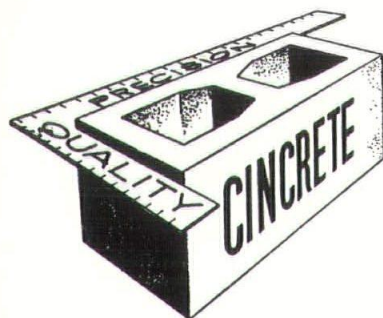
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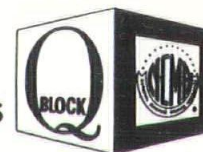
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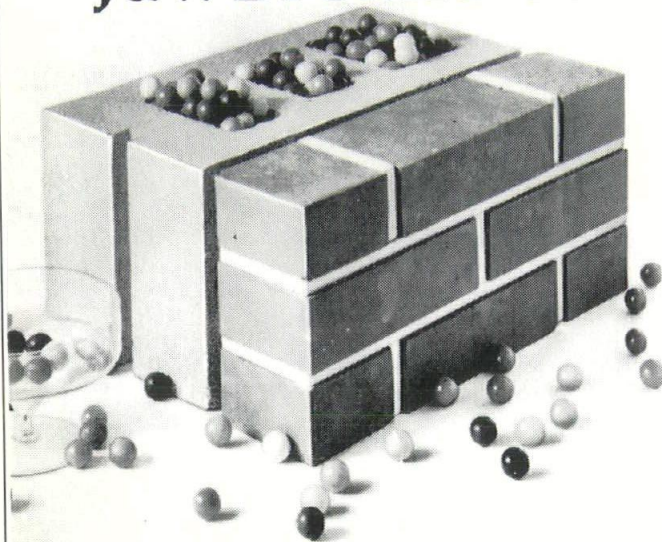
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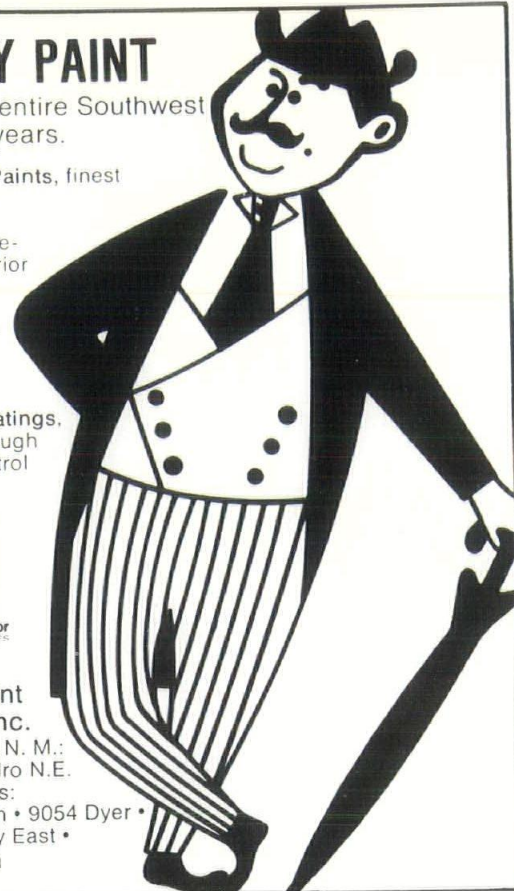
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ACSA INSTALLS NEW PRESIDENT

Don P. Schlegel was installed as president of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, Inc., (ACSA) during the corporation's annual meeting, held this year in Asheville, N. C.

Schlegel, who will serve in his new ACSA post for one year has been chairman of the Department of Architecture at the University of New Mexico since 1968, and is now in his twentieth year with the school. He is also the recipient of a design award from the Albuquerque chapter, and has been secretary of the New Mexico Society of Architects and president of the Albuquerque chapter. He is a partner in Group 5, and is currently engaged in sponsored research in arid region water use. He is also acting as a consultant on strip mining land restoration.

AN AD FROM THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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Does slavery still exist in New Mexico? The sales price "Includes personnel."

NMSA ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR NOV. 29-30

POLICY STATEMENT ON STATE WIDE LAND USE TO BE MAIN TOPIC

The Albuquerque Chapter, AIA, is to host the annual meeting of the New Mexico Society of Architects. Beginning with a cocktail reception on Friday evening, November 29, the meeting will continue Saturday with sessions discussing the needs for state-wide land use legislation.

Saturday evening an awards banquet is scheduled and a post-conference trip to Mazatlan, Mexico begins on Sunday, Dec. 1. The trip to Mexico will be for one week and is planned as relaxation and fellowship for architects and their families.

ENGINEERING GEOLOGY CONFERENCE IN DALLAS

Beginning with the evening of Jan. 23 for the first event and concluding about 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 25, architects will have an excellent opportunity to learn more about engineering geology. The importance of land structure and features is widely recognized in all building activities, but there are not many chances for professionals in the building field to receive valid information in concentrated forms. This conference at SMU will be such a meeting.

Among the headliner speakers is Dr. Robert F. Legget of Toronto and Dr. Don Deere of Gainesville, Fla. These will be surrounded by a team of program resources who are specialists in the important facets of engineering geology.

For particulars write to Conference on Engineering Geology, SMU Box 1099, Dallas, Texas 75275 or call (214) 692-2340.

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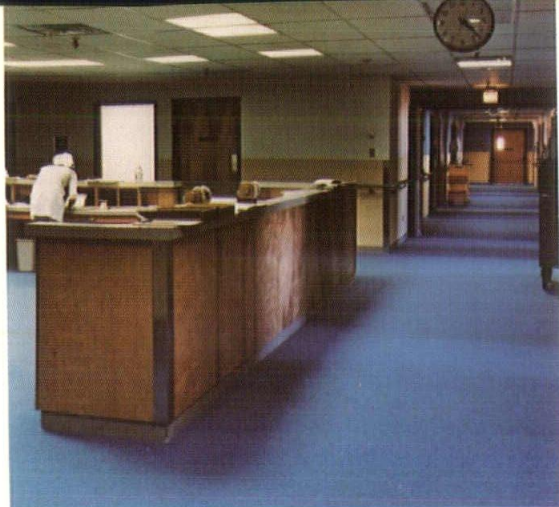
Aztech International, Ltd., Albuquerque, N. M., manufacturer of electric radiant heating panels, this summer will complete its transformation from a regional producer of custom panels to a mass producer for the whole nation, the company announced.

According to Frederick J. Buttrell, president, Aztech now has a nationwide system of 60 manufacturer's representatives who specialize in the heating, air conditioning and ventilating bid and specification market. An additional 10 representative firms will be added by the end of September to complete the nationwide network, he said. A year ago the company had three representatives for the entire country.

At the same time, the company is adding distributors serving hardware stores and lumber yards to begin penetration of the "do-it-yourself" and home improvement markets, Buttrell said.

Aztech's radiant panels, which are marketed under the "Aztec" brand name, have a patented crystalline surface which greatly increases the percent of radiant energy generated as heat and distributes that energy in a manner similar to a light diffuser. The radiant energy, emitted in the 8-10 micron wave length, will not penetrate glass, but is absorbed by the glass instead. As a result, Buttrell asserted, Aztec panels are ideal to offset perimeter heat loss with variable volume and two-pipe systems, producing substantial energy savings in commercial buildings, schools and residences.





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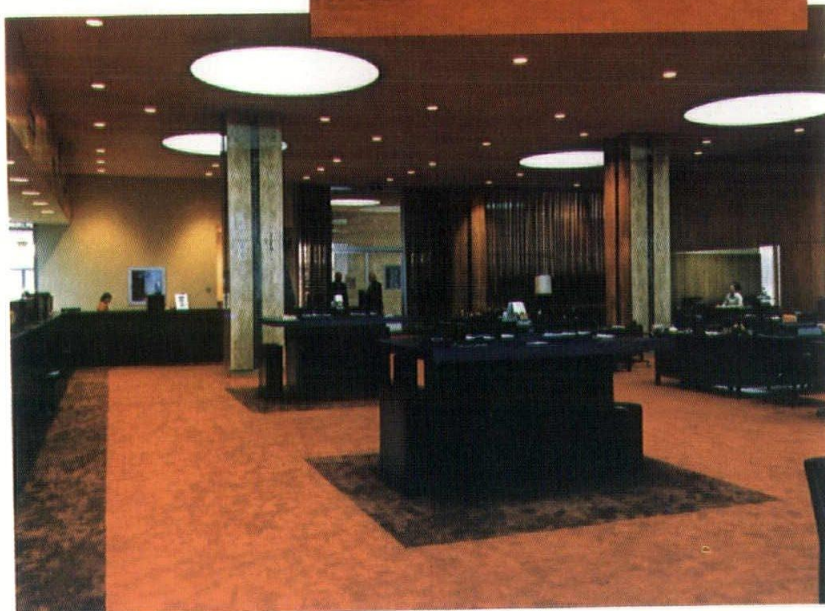
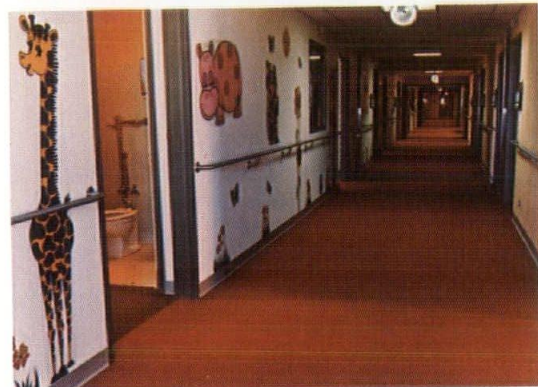


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Saving the Ilfeld Warehouse in Albuquerque

Kevin S. Munroe

After a long hard fight it appears that the Ilfeld Warehouse has been saved from the wrecker's ball and may soon be returned to a useful life. The fight was spearheaded by the Ilfeld Warehouse Redevelopment Committee, the Albuquerque Historic Landmarks Survey, and in the final push to victory by the State Planning Office, the State Cultural Properties Review Committee, and the Albuquerque City Commission. It required untold manhours and now two questions remain. What really happened, and why was it necessary?

The Ilfeld building sat at the end of a long list of Albuquerque landmarks slated for the wrecker's ball. Many of the others on the list, such as the Alvarado and Franciscan Hotels, were much more impressive than Ilfeld, but due to various twists of fate they have been lost. Today there is little left to remind us of the power and importance that the railroad brought to Albuquerque. The Ilfeld building stood as one of the few reminders of an important and colorful era in the city's history.

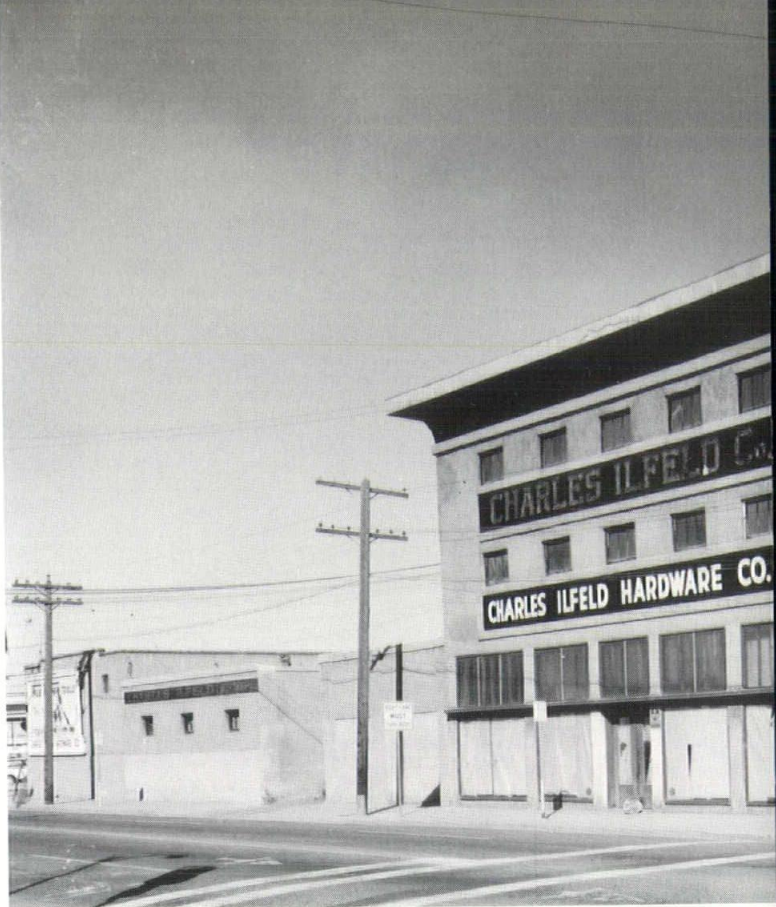
But more importantly Ilfeld's useful life was far from over. Here was a building that was thoughtfully designed to express the strength, power and quality of its owners. The position and power of the Charles Ilfeld Company had since faded to a pile of fluttering memos and receipts on the floor, but the strength of the building had not faded with the company. The steel and concrete which make up the bone and muscle of the building were still strong, still ready to do their part in aiding the future of Albuquerque and New Mexico.

FEBRUARY 9—THE FIRST SPARKS of the effort which has resulted in the apparent saving of the Ilfeld began with a visit to the building. Preliminary measurements showed that the building contained 54,000 square feet of usable space. Most of this space was unobstructed by walls and had ten to twelve foot ceilings. The first floor of the main wing contained an impressive two story space with a gallery 154 feet long. The main building, begun in 1910, is L-shaped with a main wing of three stories and a rear wing of two stories, both over a full basement. A second one-story L-shaped wing was added later and encloses a large courtyard with loading docks of wood and concrete.

The building sits in a pivotal position in the downtown area. It is only a block and a half from the Albuquerque Convention Center and within five blocks of all the major banks, transportation lines, two hotels, city, county, and federal offices, and over 20 thousand office workers.

The building could be purchased from the Urban Development Agency for \$150,000, or \$2.78 a square foot, while the cost of similar construction underway at the time was approximately \$28.50 a square foot for an equivalent shell. This made the value of the existing structure more than a million and a half dollars! Renovation costs for the building would be quite low because there were few, if any interior partitions to be removed. Estimates ranged from 10 to twenty dollars a square foot depending on what use the building would have.

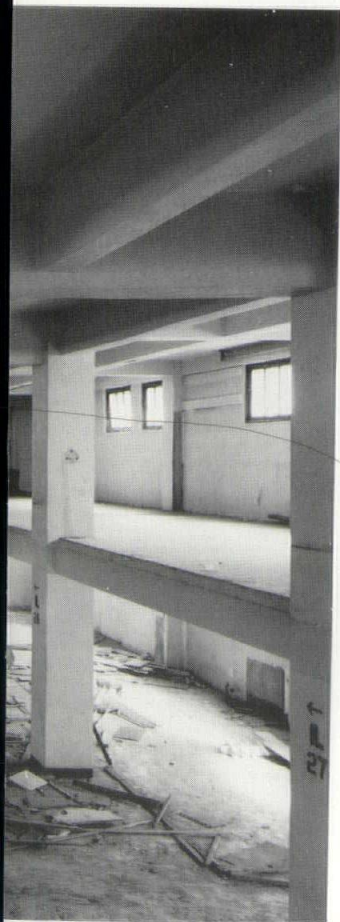
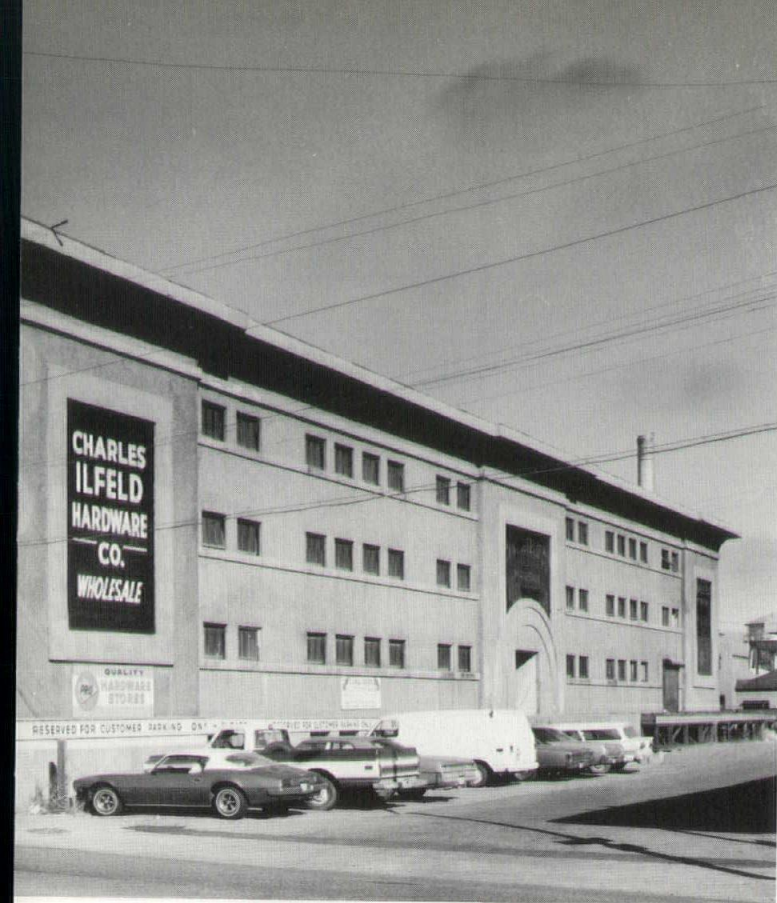
It was felt that its location would make it a perfect spot for a series of shops and restaurants, such as had been so successfully done at Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco. This would be planned to meet the needs of the businessmen and office workers in the area and the Convention Center, with an eye toward attracting tourists and other Albuquerque residents. With this aim in mind the first stage of the

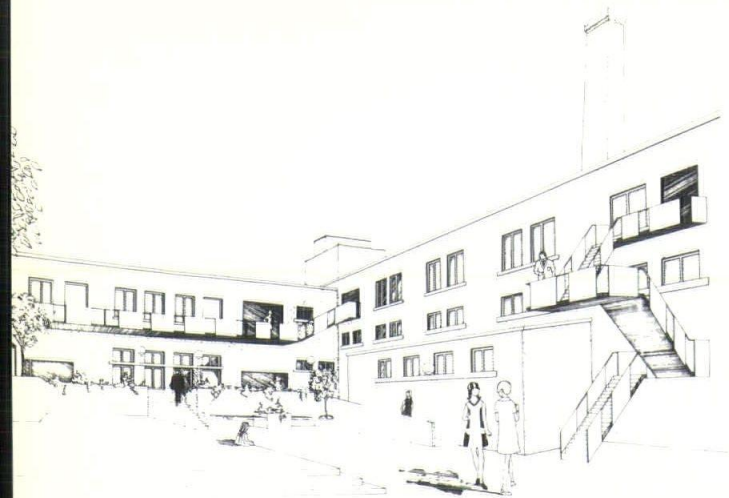


effort to save the Ilfeld Warehouse was begun. The idea at this point was not to save the building because of its historic value, although this was always a consideration, but to save it because of its economic potential and its impact in revitalizing the downtown area.

FEBRUARY 12—THE SANTA FE RAILROAD WAS CONTACTED because, although the U. D. A. owned the building, the railroad still owned the land. Any efforts to save the building would be useless unless they were willing to make some kind of arrangement. The railroad was also the most likely one to develop the building. George Kelly, traffic controller for the Santa Fe Railroad in this area, stated at a meeting that, although the railroad would not be able to develop the property themselves, they would be willing to negotiate a long term lease, or even enter into a joint venture if a suitable developer could be found.

The land was available, the building was available, but there was still one problem. U. D. A.'s lease on the land had run out as of January first and the terms of that lease required that they remove the building. As a result a demolition contract had been let on the warehouse. The next step had to be obtaining a delay in that contract.





FEBRUARY 21 — A THIRTY-DAY DEMOLITION DELAY WAS OBTAINED from U. D. A. after two meetings. The request was aided by the fact that there had recently been a rash of fires in the downtown area and U. D. A. was under a great deal of pressure to remove those buildings which presented a fire hazard. The Ilfeld Building was certainly not in that category—it was built of solid concrete.

When U. D. A. was asked for a set of rehabilitation standards for buildings within the Urban Renewal Area, Rex Allender said that it was the first time anyone had asked for them. This is quite amazing because the area had once contained many fine old buildings, most of them already destroyed without any consideration of their possible reutilization. All of this merely increased the determination to save the Ilfeld.

Now, with the delay established, a group of three part-time, unpaid, nonprofessionals had thirty days in which to find a suitable developer and financing for a million-dollar project. The amazing thing was that when the thirty days were up, they had found not one but two suitable developers, both with the necessary financing.

THE ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY OF THE PROJECT was the major factor responsible for this interest. A plan had been developed which would allow 90 percent utilization of the building as rentable space. This would provide, at the current rental rates in the area, a yearly income potential of over \$250,000. When compared with the necessary outlay this made a very strong economic picture.

The economic feasibility was further enhanced by the impressive track record compiled by other similar projects throughout the country. More and more cities in virtually every section of the nation are realizing the value and significance of the older buildings in their communities. In the forefront of this field are Seattle and Denver.

Seattle's Pioneer Square is a model of success, and an inspiration to similar projects, as the following passage from the December, 1973 *Architectural Forum* shows:

"What has happened to Pioneer Square in the last five years staggers the imagination. The assessed valuation has increased approximately 600 percent. Furthermore, says Uhlman (Seattle's mayor) while building permits in the entire city were down six percent, those for Pioneer Square were up 800 percent."

These figures are all the more amazing when one realizes that the term "Skid Row" originated as a description of Pioneer Square.

Larimer Square in Denver is another similar project. Here private developers managed to save this small area from the midst of an Urban Renewal project which destroyed at least 200 older buildings. Today Larimer Square attracts an average of ten to 15 thousand visitors a day.

But it must be prohibitively expensive for the kind of renovation needed to achieve this type of results. Not so! The renovation costs in both of these cases were approximately two-thirds the cost of the new construction around them. Figures supplied by the National Trust for Historic Preservation indicate that renovation costs generally run \$10 a square foot less than the cost for comparable new construction throughout the nation.

MARCH 13—THE MUSEUM OF ALBUQUERQUE FIRST BECAME INVOLVED when Basil West, the city's budget director, began an investigation of what possible use the city might have for the building. At this time there were two possibilities. First, the city could buy the building outright and use it either for offices or warehouse space. Or, it could lease some office space from a developer. This second option seemed to be more likely, and the most promising candidate for office space was the Museum of Albuquerque. By that evening meetings had been held with both the staff and the Board of Trustees of the Museum. Their response was very enthusiastic. Not only did they want to move their offices to the building, they wanted to move the whole museum.

MARCH 14—THE MUSEUM BOARD TOURED THE ILFELD BUILDING to see if it would be suitable for use as the new home of the Museum. As a result of this tour a letter was written by Richard Bice, chairman of the board of trustees, which concluded:

"In summary, the Museum Board and the Museum Staff consider that the Ilfeld Building could be an exceptional home for the Museum of Albuquerque."

It seems that the Museum had been trying to find new facilities for some time because of the cramped conditions of their present home in the old Albuquerque Sun Port Building. Their estimates showed that the cost of a new building to meet their needs would be in the neighborhood of five million dollars. The necessary renovation to Ilfeld Warehouse, including acquisition of the building and land, to meet the same requirements would only cost three million dollars. Once again an economical use for the building had been found, and it was none too soon.

MARCH 19—THE SANTA FE RAILWAY BEGAN BACKING OUT of their agreement to negotiate on the land by delaying the meeting which had been set up. Negotiations with the Santa Fe had by this time moved to the head office in Chicago. Terms for a lease had been discussed and everything had been running smoothly. Suddenly the Santa Fe was turning around for no apparent reason.

MARCH 27—THE RAILROAD SAID NO without ever hearing the full proposal. After a great deal of effort and a meeting on the local level, the meeting between the developer and the railroad representatives finally took place. One of those at the meeting described the railroads attitude as, "our mind is made up don't confuse us with the facts." No reason was ever given as to why the Santa Fe Railway changed its mind. And, although many leads were followed up, no reason was ever uncovered.

MARCH 28—THE CITY'S REPLY was received in the form of a memorandum dated the 22nd of March from Basil West. In the memo he stated that the request for space from the Museum had to be considered "as competitive with other capital improvement projects . . .". Specifically the Museum had to be considered as competitive with warehouse space. Since his study showed that the museum space was more expensive than warehouse space he recommended that:

"The city should not acquire the Ilfeld (sic) Building nor attempt to obtain use of the building for any purpose."

All efforts had apparently run into dead ends. The delay in demolition was over, the railroad was no longer willing to sell or lease the land, and the city had recommended against acquiring the building. Still the effort continued, trying to pick up on some loose end, or find some new way to proceed. This led to several questions regarding the purchase of the building.

APRIL 22—DEMOLITION WAS TO BEGIN IN ONE WEEK so a last-ditch meeting was called to see if some solution could be worked out. The city manager, city budget director, three representatives of U. D. A., and representatives from the Albuquerque Historic Landmarks Survey and the Ilfeld Warehouse Redevelopment Committee all met at City

Hall. Unfortunately, despite the potential savings of two million dollars, the city felt that the Museum was not high enough on the capital improvements priority list. U. D. A. felt that they could wait no longer since they were paying rent on the land as long as the building was standing. The Ilfeld Warehouse appeared doomed.

MAY 1—THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION VISITED Albuquerque. After being taken on a day-long tour of the city, including the now doomed Ilfeld Building, John Frisbee, the director of the Trust's western field service, spoke to the Historic Landmark's Survey. He called his visit, "one of the most depressing field trips I've ever been on." And said, "Albuquerque seems to be loaded with demolition experts. Downtown is dead. There's not an ounce of character left. We can't let Urban Renewal get away with it."

He also spoke of existing legislation that might save the building and specifically Executive Order 11593. Briefly, this states that any federal agency, or any agency using federal funds, must do everything within its power to see that any building under their jurisdiction, which might qualify for the National Register, is protected.

MAY 2—PHONES WERE RINGING in the Washington and Denver offices of H. U. D. and at the State Planning Office in Santa Fe to see in what way the executive order might apply. The investigation had begun.

MAY 3—DEMOLITION BEGAN at eight o'clock in the morning and continued for four hours. At noon the State Planning Office called U. D. A. to tell them that the demolition might be in violation of the law. The call was four hours too late for 60 feet of the south wall but was soon enough to save the building from irreparable damage.



MAY 17—"HISTORIC STATUS GIVEN TO ILFELD WAREHOUSE"—(*Albuquerque Journal*)—The State Cultural Properties Review Committee voted unanimously to place the Ilfeld Building on the state's registry of historic places.

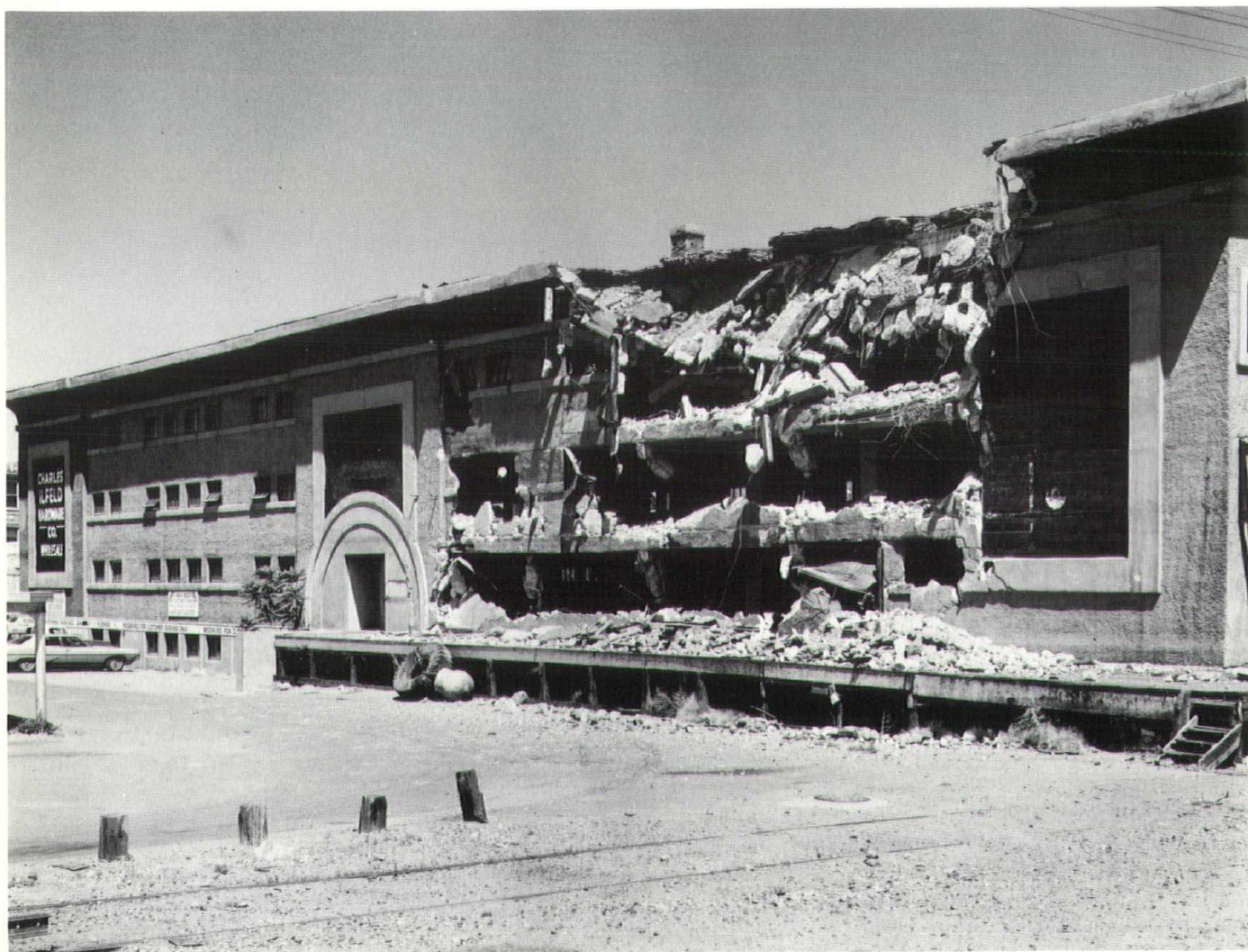
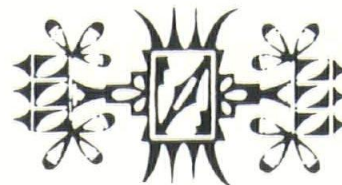
MAY 20 — "CITY COMMISSION APPROVES SAVING ILFELD WAREHOUSE"—(*The Albuquerque Tribune*)—The City Commission voted to pay the rent on the Ilfeld Warehouse until studies can be made into the feasibility of the city's buying the building.

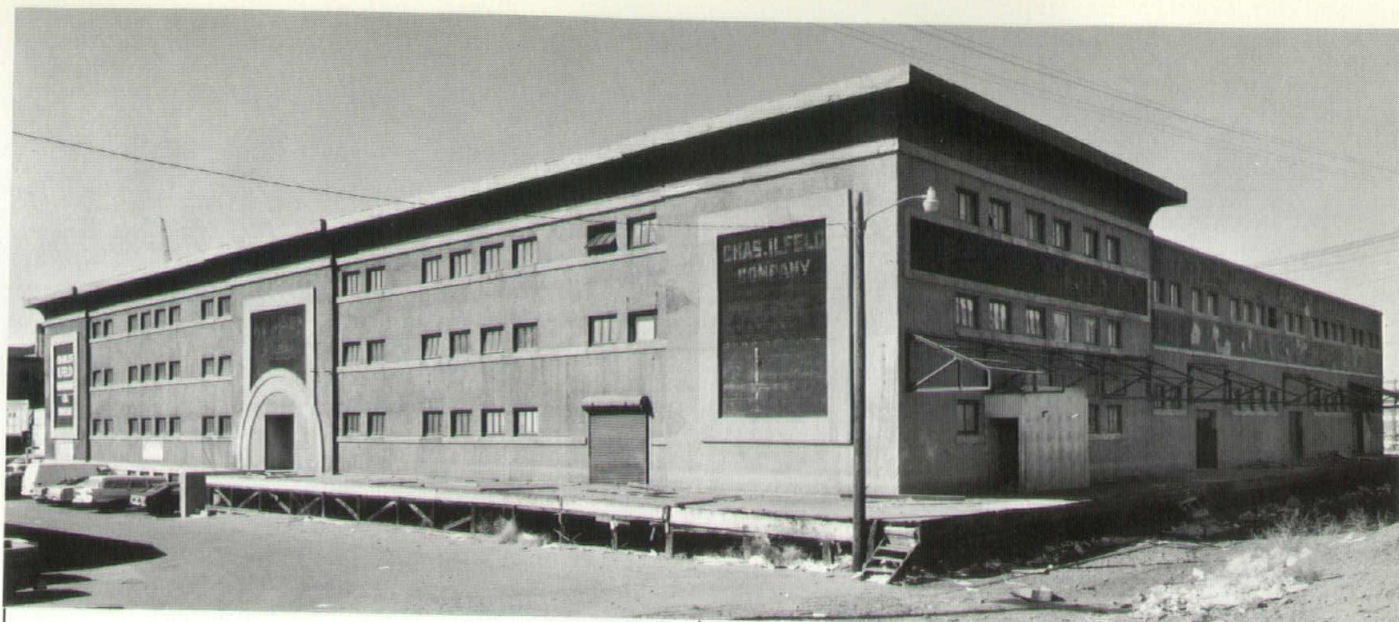
JUNE 24 — "CITY VOTES TO BUY ILFELD BUILDING"—(*Albuquerque Journal*)—The City Commission received the studies it had requested and acted to save the warehouse for possible use as the future home of the Museum of Albuquerque. They also committed \$200,000 to bring the building up to code and instructed U. D. A. to apply for \$90,000 in federal funds for the same purpose. The voters will decide whether the building will actually become the new home for the museum in a bond issue in October of 1975, but the city is now committed to buy the warehouse regardless of the outcome of that election.

JULY 8—"THE STATE PLANNING OFFICE TODAY RECOMMENDED THAT THE CHARLES ILFELD BUILDING BE DECLARED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK."

And so it appears that the Ilfeld Warehouse has been saved after a long hard fight. It was always a fight deeply rooted in the solid economics of a building which still had a great deal to give the people of Albuquerque. It is not a beautiful building—it merely refused to die before its time. K.S.M.

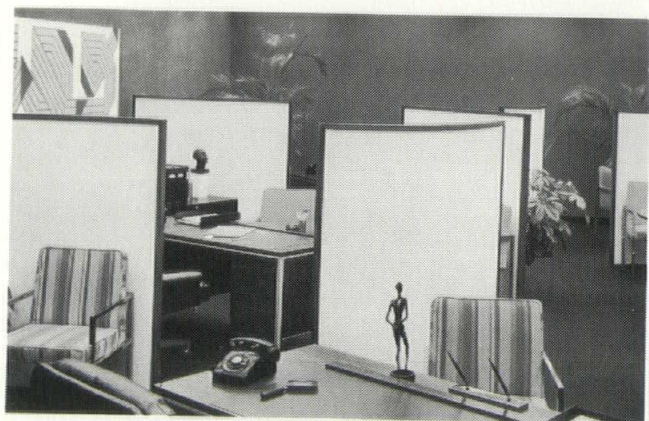
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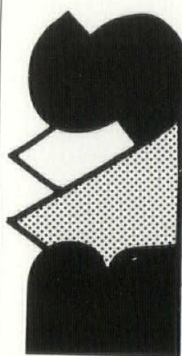
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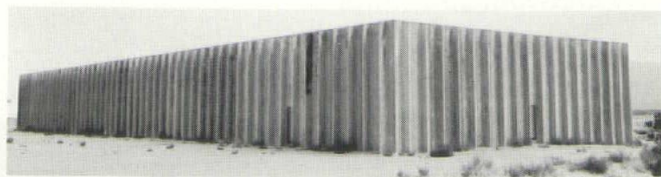
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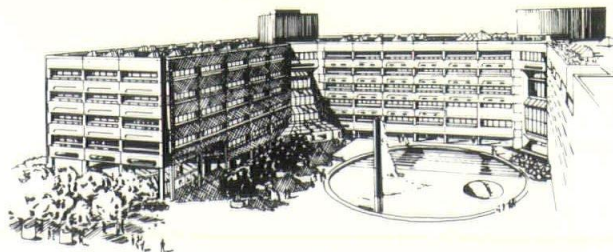
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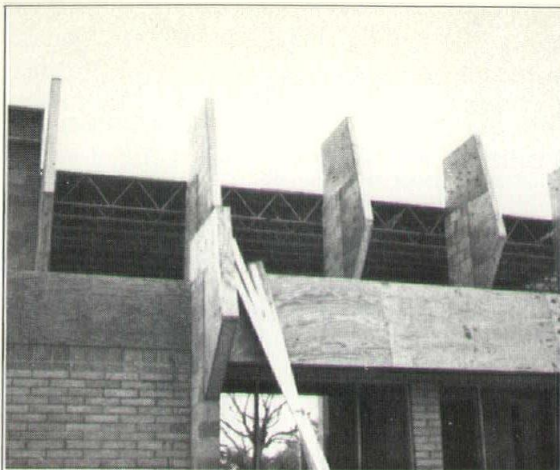
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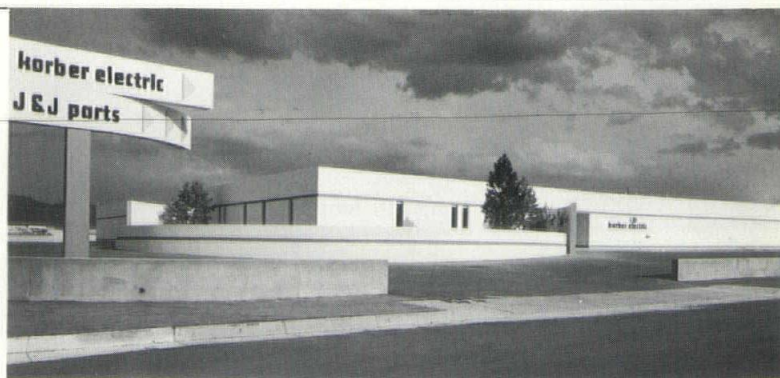
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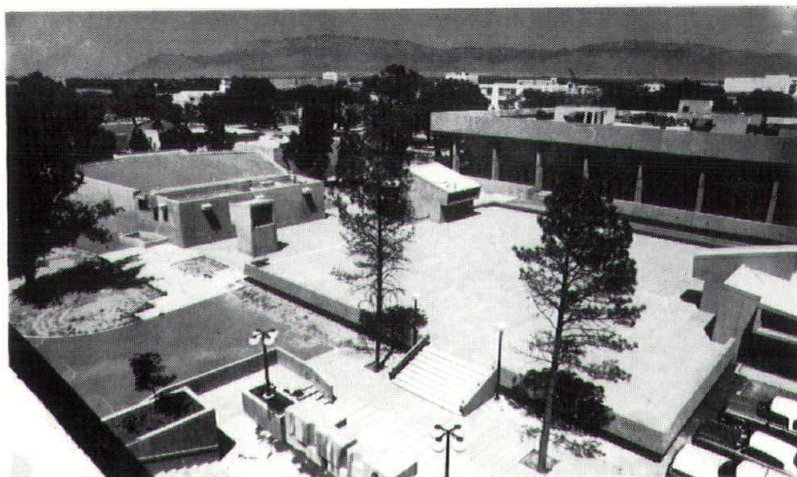
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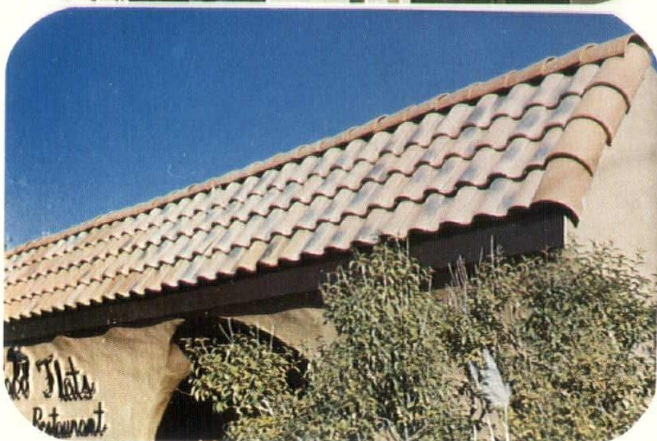
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Builders Block & Stone Co., Inc.	4
Century Roof Tile, Inc.	23
Cook's Building Specialties	17
Crego Block Co., Inc.	2
Hanley Paint Mfg. Co., Inc.	6
Hydro Conduit Corporation	24
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Mason Contractors Assn. of N.M.	5
McGill Co., Inc., Geo. B.	21
New Mexico Office Furniture	21
Overhead Door Co. of Albuquerque ...	6
Prestressed Concrete Products, Inc. ...	19
Rocky Mountain Stone Co.	17
San Vallé Tile Kilns	18
Southern Union Gas Co.	8
Southwestern Portland Cement Co. ...	22
Southwest Vermiculite Co.	6
Spectra Glaze	20
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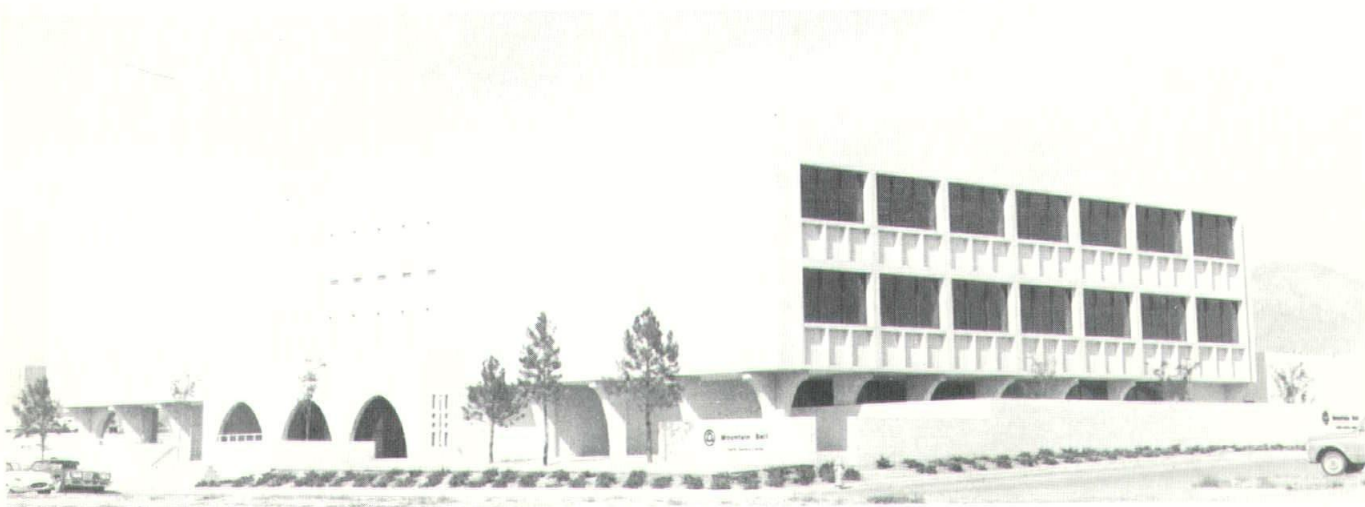
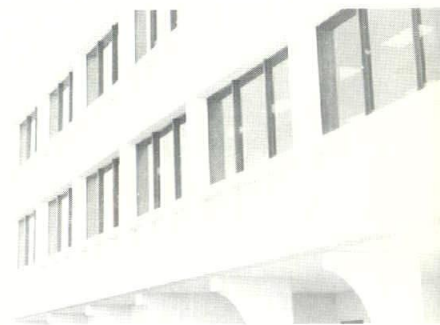
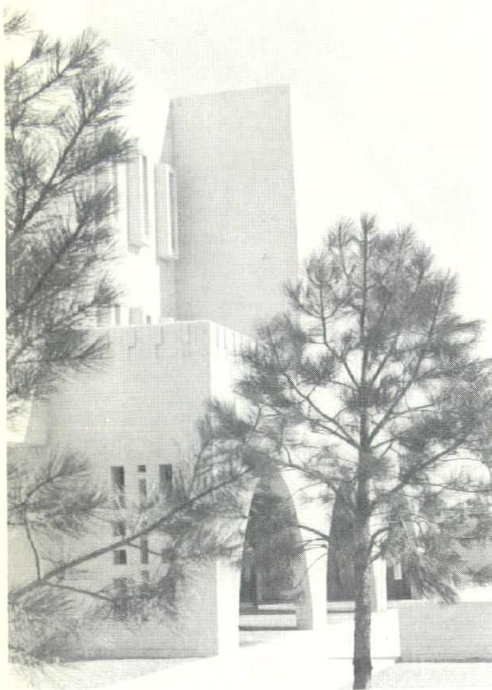
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